

CD 2007--122



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

WIND AND BRASS

University of Toronto Wind Ensemble
Gillian MacKay, conductor

Saturday, November 21, 2009
7:30 p.m. MacMillan Theatre
Edward Johnson Building



09/10
SEASON

University of Toronto Wind Ensemble
Gillian MacKay, conductor

PROGRAM

Lollapalooza

John Adams

(b. 1947)

Transcribed by James Spinazzola

Suite from China West

Chen Yi

(b. 1953)

- I. Introduction
- II. Meng Songs
- III. Zang Songs
- IV. Miao Dances

Leah McGray Manning, conductor

The Leaves are Falling

Warren Benson

(1924-2005)

Bali

Michael Colgrass

(b. 1932)

Track 5- Ewazen Speech. INTERMISSION -

The Eternal Dance of Life

Eric Ewazen

(b. 1954)

- I. Poised Between Heaven and Earth
- II. The Human Spirit Travels
- III. Entering the Spirits of the Creatures of the Earth
- IV. Who Dance the Eternal Dance of Life

NEXUS, soloists

Canadian premiere performance

NEXUS has received the support of the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation.

PEARL percussion instruments and ADAMS marimbas used by NEXUS courtesy of
Pearl Corporation & Adams Musical Instruments.

NEXUS Canadian Representation:

Peggy Feltmate, 44 Normandy Boulevard, Toronto, Ontario, M4L 3K2 - Canada, Tel: 416 699-9818.

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Program Notes

JOHN ADAMS **Lollapalooza**

American composer and 2003 Pulitzer Prize winning composer John Adams (b. 1947) is best known for his operatic and symphonic writing. His New England upbringing had him heavily involved as a clarinet player in local marching bands and community orchestras and saw him composing as young as age 10. He earned two degrees from Harvard University before moving to San Francisco in 1971 to teach at the Conservatory of Music. He was also the composer-in-residence for the San Francisco Symphony, and many of his orchestral works were written for and premiered by this group.

Adams currently works as an active composer and conductor across the United States and Europe, and many of his symphonic works have been adapted for the wind ensemble. While there has been speculation about the title, *Lollapalooza*, Adams himself admits to being attracted to the rhythm and the natural cadence of the word, and uses it as the central figure played by the low brass and woodwinds in this composition. As each part joins in on a fragment of this theme, the texture becomes increasingly thick, to resemble Adams favoured definition: "suggesting something large, outlandish, oversized, not unduly refined".

More information about John Adams and *Lollapalooza* can be found at www.earbox.com.
- Leah McGray Manning

CHEN YI **Suite from China West**

Perhaps the most internationally renowned female Asian composer of contemporary music today, Chen Yi (b. 1953) has in particular become a prominent figure in music circles in the United States and China. Ms. Chen began violin and piano studies at age three, which were interrupted by the Cultural Revolution in 1966. She later studied composition at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing where she earned her MA, the first Chinese woman to receive this degree in music. She obtained her Doctorate in Musical Arts at Columbia University, and has teaches

composition at the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and at the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri, Kansas City.

Suite from China West is inspired by folk music from different ethnic minority groups living in China. The first movement is based on a traditional song where two men are competing for a woman's attention through a song contest, ending in a jealous rage and tragedy. *Gada Meilin* provides the mournful melody of the second movement, as a Mongolian folk hero leaves yet again to defend his people and their lands from invaders. The third movement provides a number of stylized dance melodies from the Zang culture in which music is part of the rhythm of their daily lives, and the fourth movement draws its energy from the relentless rhythms of the Tibetan reed-organ instrument, the lusheng.

More information about Chen Yi can be found at www.presser.com/Composers/info.cfm?Name=ChenYi
- LMM

WARREN BENSON **The Leaves are Falling**

Warren Benson was one of the most important early advocates of the wind ensemble and its potential. Benson served first on the faculty of Ithaca College and then at the Eastman School, where he was a mentor to many young percussionists and composers (including Eric Ewazen, composer of tonight's Canadian Premiere, and several members of NEXUS). When commissioned to compose a wind work in 1963, Benson was determined to create something different than the short, energetic, loud wind works which were so prevalent at the time. Instead, he sought to create a longer work which revealed itself slowly, moving toward and away from climactic moments without giving all its energy away. *The Leaves are Falling* is in two large sections, each of which begins with slow chimes and solo flute. The second section is overlaid with statements from the great Protestant hymn, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* (*Ein' Feste Burg*), fragments of which appear, not always in order, both aligned and misaligned with the

ongoing music. The inspiration for the piece was a poem called *Herbst* (Autumn) by Rainer Maria Rilke. Benson's choice for this source material was influenced by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, which occurred forty-six years ago tomorrow, on November 22, 1963. The global sense of loss and hopelessness which followed his death is very much a part of this work. This is one of the most significant and difficult works in our repertoire, due to the technical demands at both ends of the dynamic spectrum, the incredibly slow tempo, and the rate of musical development.

- Gillian MacKay

MICHAEL COLGRASS

Bali

Michael Colgrass (b.1932) currently resides in Toronto as a composer and author. Formerly from Chicago, Colgrass worked extensively as a professional percussionist, playing for such varied groups as the New York Philharmonic, Dizzy Gillespie, the original West Side Story orchestra on Broadway, and numerous ballet, opera and jazz ensembles. He won the 1978 Pulitzer Prize for his composition *Déjà vu*, an Emmy for a PBS documentary about his music, and has received many other prestigious awards. Mr. Colgrass has been commissioned by many of the major symphony orchestras in North America. Most recently, he has given workshops with school programs, in teaching students to write and perform their own music.

Bali was inspired by Colgrass' two summers living in Indonesia, and uses a five-note scale that is unique to that culture. Listen especially for the unique percussion sounds created by ceramic pots and metal bowls. The bright rhythms are brought to a halt by a musical representation of the 2002 terrorist bombing of the nightclub in Denpassar, and moves into a lament for the people who lost their lives. As a spiritual monument is erected in their memory, the joy of the original music slowly returns to peoples' everyday lives.

More information about Michael Colgrass and his work is located at www.michaelcolgrass.com.

- LMM

ERIC EWAZEN

The Eternal Dance of Life

We are honoured to present the Canadian premiere of this new work by Eric Ewazen. The first performance occurred a year ago at the Percussive Arts Society conference in Texas, with commissioning conductor Jack Delaney and the Southern Methodist University Wind Ensemble. (Jack Delaney was also colleague and friend of Warren Benson) Eric Ewazen teaches at the Juilliard School in New York City. Having earlier been inspired by the performances of NEXUS, Ewazen was pleased to respond to a request from Delaney for a piece for percussion ensemble and winds. Specific inspiration for this piece developed at a Toronto workshop with NEXUS and Jack Delaney. During that week, Ewazen visited the Museum of Inuit Art and was taken with the Inuit stone and bone sculptures, particularly animated sculptures of dancing polar bears. The Inuit traditionally believe that that after death a human spirit spends some time inhabiting animals. The four movements of this work follow the spirit's journey. In the first movement, *Poised Between Heaven and Earth*, Ewazen explores the idea of death in the North, where the end of life can be sudden and dramatic. In *The Human Spirit Travels*, the end of human life is acknowledged, but something goes on – a life force is travelling seeking, and rising throughout the movement. In the mystical third movement, *Entering the Spirits of the Creatures of the Earth*, we hear the life force entering the animal – although the human life is over and lamented, the arrivals into major harmony indicate that something lives on. Ultimately, in *Who Dance the Eternal Dance of Life*, Inuit drumming begins, and we also hear the dancing of the newly-animated bears – large, bulky, and unaccustomed to life on two legs, the polar bears celebrate their new spirit in 7/8 time. More information about Eric Ewazen and his music can be found at www.ericewazen.com.

More information about NEXUS can be found at www.nexuspercussion.com. More information about the Museum of Inuit Art can be found at www.miamuseum.ca

- GM

Biographies



Gillian MacKay is the Associate Dean for Graduate Education at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, where she also conducts wind ensembles, and teaches conducting,

trumpet, and music education. An award-winning teacher, Gillian MacKay has an active career as an adjudicator, conductor, and clinician throughout Canada and the United States. As a trumpeter, she is busy as a recitalist, orchestral player, and chamber musician. Gillian holds degrees and diplomas from the University of Lethbridge, McGill University, the University of Calgary, and Northwestern University. She has held previous faculty positions at the University of Windsor and Medicine Hat College.

The first, entirely improvised **NEXUS** concert in 1971 marked the formation of a group that would touch and entertain people of all levels of musical learning, in all genres of percussion music.

Bob Becker, Bill Cahn, Robin Engelman, Russell Hartenberger and Garry Kvistad are virtuosos of their craft, and bring elements of their knowledge and experience to a distinct and powerful whole. They stand out in the contemporary music scene for the innovation and diversity of their programs, their impressive history of collaborations and commissions, their revival of 1920's novelty ragtime xylophone music, and their influential improvisatory ideas. NEXUS' firm commitment to music education and a steady output of quality CD recordings and compositions by its members continues to enhance the role of percussion in the twenty first century.

NEXUS' music, with its widespread appeal, has taken the group on tours of Australia, New Zealand, Asia, Brazil, Scandinavia, Europe, and regularly to the United States and Canada. NEXUS is proud to have been the first Western percussion group to perform in the People's Republic of China. They have also enjoyed participating at international

music festivals such as the Adelaide, Holland, Budapest Spring, Singapore Arts, Tanglewood, Ravinia, and Blossom Music Festivals, as well as the BBC Proms in London, Music Today and Music Joy festivals in Tokyo, and many World Drum Festivals. NEXUS is the recipient of the Banff Centre for the Arts National Award and the Toronto Arts Award. NEXUS was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame in 1999, just before celebrating their 30th anniversary season.

Especially renowned for their improvisational skills, NEXUS was called upon to create the musical score for the National Film Board's *Inside Time*, which won the 2008 Yorkton Golden Sheaf award for best social/political documentary and the 2008 Robert Brooks award for cinematography. TV and radio broadcasters such as the CBS TV, PBS, and CBC have regularly featured this leading percussion ensemble. NEXUS also created the chilling score for the Academy Award-winning feature-length documentary *The Man Who Skied Down Everest*. NEXUS' list of high-profile collaborations includes Steve Reich, the Kronos Quartet, the Canadian Brass, and clarinetist Richard Stoltzman.

Toru Takemitsu, a great friend to NEXUS, composed one of their signature pieces, *From me flows what you call Time*. This work, written with each NEXUS member's personality in mind, was premiered for Carnegie Hall's centennial celebration in 1990 with Seiji Ozawa conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra (recorded on Sony with the Pacific Symphony). In 2005, Pulitzer Prize winning composer Ellen Taaffe Zwilich composed *Rituals* for NEXUS and Chamber Orchestra. New Music Box calls it "one of Zwilich's most exciting compositions to date...[a] blockbuster piece!" The recording features NEXUS and the IRIS Orchestra.

Recent NEXUS events include performances at the 2008 Ojai Festival in California where the *Los Angeles Times* music critic commented, "Ojai felt, for that hour, like holy ground." This followed on their 2007 Ojai performances that reviewer Charles Donelan called "thrilling" and said would

"certainly stand as one of the most memorable of 2007 in any venue, anywhere". NEXUS has also recently appeared at the Colours of Music, Cool Drumming, Collingwood, Kincardine and the Ottawa Chamber Music Festivals, and at Woodstock Beat in New York. A solo CD entitled *Wings* has just been released, and their CD "out of the blue" with Fritz Hauser was released in March 2007. NEXUS' previous solo CD was the Juno-nominated *Drumtalker*. In 2007 NEXUS honored John Cage at Bard College's Fisher Center in New York, giving the U.S. premiere of *Dance Music* for Elfrid Ide (1940), which was rediscovered in 2005. In October NEXUS spear-headed the Talking Drum Symposium with the Jackman Humanities Institute, held on two U of T campuses. NEXUS premiered a newly commissioned work by the acclaimed composer Eric Ewazen in Texas in November 2008. In April 2009 NEXUS premiered a new work by marimba virtuoso Gordon Stout (commissioned on behalf of NEXUS by Frank Zappa's percussionist Ruth Komanoff Underwood). Upcoming events include residencies at Brock University, Bowling Green State University, and University of Windsor, performances with the

Windsor Symphony and the completion of a new recording of John Cage works with Adrienne Clarkson and others.

Leah McGray Manning originally hails from Nova Scotia, completing the Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Education degrees from Acadia University. Before returning to studies at University of Toronto, Leah taught in public school band, choral and string programs in Ontario, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. Leah has performed as a clarinetist with the Atlantic Wind Orchestra, Sackville Community Bands, New Brunswick Winds, and Symphony New Brunswick. She is an active member of the Ontario Band Association, and works with MusicFest Canada on the management team for the National Concert Band. Pursuing studies in conducting has provided Leah with opportunity to study with such renowned conductors as Frank Battisti, Mallory Thompson, Mark Scatterday, Paula Holcomb, Mark Hopkins and Gillian MacKay. She is completing her Master degree in Wind Conducting with Gillian MacKay at the University of Toronto.

Nexus

Percussion Ensemble



Steve Reich: Music for Pieces of Wood

Arvo Pärt: *spiegel im spiegel* (arr. Hartenberger)

John Cage: Chess Pieces (arr. Nozny)

William Cahn: The Birds

Gordon Stout: Prelude - Winter Song

Steve Reich: Drumming, Part 1

William Cahn: Kebjar Bali

Monday, November 23, 2009

7:30 pm. Walter Hall. \$25 (\$15 seniors/students).

Box Office: 416-978-3744

University of Toronto Wind Ensemble

FLUTE

Alexa Ball
Tristan Durie
Roseen Giles
Emily Johnson
Wei Ting Pan
Sanghee Park

OBOE

Chieh-Ying Lu, *English horn*
Agnes Ng, *English horn*
Aleh Remezau

CLARINET

Kathleen Arnup, *E-flat*
Sydney Chang
Kishan Chouhan, *bass*
Jason Chum
Michelle Cruz, *bass*
Caitlin De Rosenroll, *contrabass*
Leah McGray Manning, *alto*
Ernesto Rapoport, *contra-alto*
Robin Soper

BASSOON

Shirley Chen
Jeffrey Clements
Aggie Stephenson, *contra*

SAXOPHONE

Michael Braschel
Christopher Britton
Scott Harbin
Shaun Mallinen
Olivia Shortt
Richard Van

HORN

Carlie Bigelow
Will Callaghan
Peter Clarke
Jennifer Fawcett
Lauren Scobie

TRUMPET

Karin Anderson
Samara Desrochers
Anthony Nero
Rachel O'Connor
Benjamin Promane
Matthew Ross

TROMBONE

Elburz Sorkhabi
Ryan Broughton, *bass*
Lydia VamVouras

EUPHONIUM

Kohei Kamikawa
Brendan Rawlins
Cameron Rawlins
Devin Sloos

TUBA

Charles Henderson
Eric Probst

CONTRABASS

Fraser Gottlieb

HARP

Anna Odell

PERCUSSION

Alejandro Céspedes Pazos
Bruce Chi
Jennifer Collins
Dorian Cox
Gregory Harrison
Rafael Ponciano

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